EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING AND PROGRESS AGAINST OUTCOMES REPORT 2015-17
Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to detail the progress the College is making towards meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and how the College is mainstreaming this duty to ensure that everyone who comes to the College to learn or work receives the best possible experience.

The report gives information on how all areas of the College are mainstreaming Equality into their everyday life and work and how we are meeting the “3 needs”.

Using examples, the report demonstrates how far the College has come in its equalities journey since merger in 2013.

The Report evidences the significant progress made, and improvements in, data collection and reporting. These improvements have enabled us to set evidence based outcomes for 2017-21 and to report meaningfully on Staff Equalities, the gender pay gap and occupational segregation.

The Report also demonstrates the positive way the College engages with its partners to provide innovative learning opportunities for students, which break down barriers and give learners from all backgrounds and protected characteristics positive destinations.

In addition, the report covers progress against the Equality Outcomes for 2015-17.

There is a separate document for the College’s new Equality Outcomes 2017-21 and there is an additional report incorporating the College’s Equal Pay Statement & Policy, Gender Pay Gap and Occupational Segregation analyses.
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About North East Scotland College

North East Scotland College is the only further education college located within the North East of Scotland, and provides a wide range of education and training opportunities across the region to meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers.

The College serves an extensive geographical area: Aberdeen City: 186 sq km, Aberdeenshire: 6,313 sq km, with main centres of delivery, Aberdeen and Fraserburgh, located 41 miles apart. There is also provision in a number of the region’s main centres of population outside these two main centres, including: Ellon, Inverurie, Peterhead and Stonehaven.

Each year, the College enrolls approximately 24,000 students (7,000 full-time and 17,000 part-time).

The College delivers an effective and dynamic curriculum which develops essential skills for learning, life and work, while providing a learning and teaching environment that attracts and retains learners and helps them to achieve.

Engagement with key stakeholders ensures that the needs of the region are identified, that training meets the needs of local and regional employers and that learner demand is delivered. A wide range of training is provided for the region’s key sectors: Oil and Gas, Food and Drink; Hospitality and Tourism; Life Sciences and Creative Industries.

The College curriculum for the region is fully integrated, with clear progression and articulation pathways within and beyond the College.

The College is committed to working with schools, universities and employers to secure seamless transition from school to College and on to university or

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The College has formal Articulation Agreements in place with nine universities, and Memorandums of Understanding with the two local authorities to provide vocational education and skills development for school pupils.

**Vision, Values and Strategic Aims**

Our Vision is to “transform lives and support regional development” and we are committed to providing a learning and working environment which advances equality and inclusion, where everyone is respected, valued and supported.

This ethos is supported by our values; specifically the values of Respect and Diversity, which apply to everyone who comes to the College to learn or work.

**Respect and Diversity**

- Valuing the experience and talent of all
- Treating others with dignity and respect
- Creating an accessible, inclusive learning and working environment
- Being fair, open and transparent to ensure a culture of mutual trust and integrity

Our values and commitment to equality and inclusion are also demonstrated by our Strategic Aims and Objectives for 2015-18.

**Strategic Aim 2 is:**

*To provide accessible programmes of study that lead to positive outcomes for students*. These aspirations will continue to be reflected in the College’s activities throughout the planning period.

Objective: To work with partners in the public and voluntary sectors to provide appropriately targeted learning opportunities for educationally disadvantaged groups, (including those furthest from the labour market, those with disabilities, those with additional support needs, and looked-after young people).“
Objective: To maintain a range of College courses, suited to differing levels of prior experience and learning, in order to provide appropriate progression opportunities within the College, to university or to work-based qualifications.”

Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination law, consolidating it into a single act. The Public Sector Equality Duty was created by the Equality Act 2010, and replaces the race, disability and gender equality duties. It is supported by the specific duties contained in The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 as amended.

There are General and Specific Duties for public authorities.

General Duty

Requires Public Authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Specific Duties

These require Public Authorities to:

- Report on mainstreaming the equality duty into all functions
- Publish equality outcomes that cover all protected characteristics and report on progress
- Gather and use information on the protected characteristics of employees
- Publish gender pay gap information
• Publish statements on equal pay; and occupational segregation (gender, race and disability)
• Publish Board diversity information
• Assess the impact of new and revised policies and practices against the needs of the general duty
• Have due regard to the general duty in specified procurement practices
• Publish the above information in a manner that is accessible

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this report is therefore to report on the progress the College is making towards meeting these duties and to detail how the College is mainstreaming the Public Sector Equality duty thus ensuring that everyone who comes to the College to learn or work receives the best possible experience. In addition, the report covers progress against the achievement of the Equality Outcomes for 2015-17. New Equality Outcomes for 2017-21 are detailed in a separate report.

Equalities at NESCol

Since the last report, the College has made significant steps in establishing strategic and operational groups which work together to ensure the “three needs” are met. These groups “own” the Equality Outcomes and work to mainstream equalities into all College functions. This in turn enables increasingly positive outcomes and experiences for those who learn and work at the College.
**Equality and Diversity Strategy Group** – This group has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the College’s Equality and Diversity Strategy. Chaired by the Vice Principal Human Resources, it brings together key managers with responsibility for ensuring the College remains an equal, diverse and inclusive environment for both students and staff and monitors the implementation of the Equality Outcomes. This Group reports directly into the Senior Management Team and the Regional Board.

**Inclusiveness Committee** – A Committee of the College’s Academic Board and chaired by the Vice Principal Learning and Quality, this is a group of key managers and staff from the curriculum and student services. Its remit is to deliver the Access and Inclusion Strategy and the College’s Equality Outcomes.

**Staff Equality Group** - This group has been re-established to form a representative group of staff with a keen interest in advancing equality across the College. Acting as Equality Champions, the group plays a key role in delivering the College's Equality Outcomes and related Action Plan and in embedding the College’s Values of Respect and Diversity.

**Quality Improvement and Assurance Committee (QIAC)** – A committee of the College’s Academic Board and chaired by the Vice Principal Learning and Quality this group seeks to align its quality and equality approaches by directly linking to the other Equality Groups to ensure the delivery of the College’s Equality Outcomes.
Culture Change – Vision & Values

During 2015 a great deal of work was undertaken to embed the College’s Vision and Values.

A series of Workshops for College managers ran from February until April 2015. In addition a questionnaire was sent out to staff asking them:

1. What has been the main positive outcomes from becoming One College? (i.e. since merger)
2. What one thing could we improve that would make a positive impact?

The feedback from the Workshops and the questionnaire were collated and key actions identified. The College’s Leadership Team led on the outcomes and work was undertaken on

- Communication – To improve organisational communication
- Integration/Implementation – To improve organisational integration by identifying projects and actions including the sharing of best practice across College Centres.
- Leadership – To build and improve leadership and management capacity

This work has resulted in a range of positive initiatives for change including improved communication across the College and leadership development initiatives including a 360 degrees pilot.

In November 2015 we were assessed against the new IIP standards and achieved accreditation at Silver. In December 2016 we had our annual assessment and the employee survey indicated that we had demonstrably improved against all the key indicators.
IIP reported that staff are feeling “engaged, positive and have greater optimism than a year ago.” There is a feeling that communication has improved and staff are feeling well informed. Leaders are seen as being more visible. The anxieties of a year ago have not been realised. Staff have seen a number of positive things happening and this has led to them feeling more confident. Overall trust has developed and this needs to be retained. There were also positive comments made about:

- Staff Excellence Awards
- Visons and Values roll out
- Social opportunities.
- Fitness facilities
- Learning opportunities for family.
• Formal and informal processes for managing mental health as well as the knowledge and understanding of related issues.

This demonstrates how the College is “living” its values. The College is now moving forward with a new approach to employee engagement. Equality and Diversity is embedded in this approach.

Mainstreaming Equality in Student Services

Student Services plays a critical role in supporting the curriculum with recruitment, pre-application and pre-entry, enrolment, on-programme support and at the pre-exit stage. The Learning Development Team (LDT) supports the work of the College in a variety of ways, dealing with both complex and non-complex enquiries. Designated staff within LDT conduct initial needs assessments. A consequence of this assessment might be the creation of a Personal Learning and Support Plan (PLSP). The details are shared with the applicant/student, curriculum and support staff on a need-to-know basis. This process supports the key aims of the College in terms of promoting wider access, equality of opportunity and improving standards and outcomes for the student.

Student Services conducted a review of the learning support provided to students, by protected characteristics category. The data showed that, in relation to disclosed disabilities, 66% of the students successfully completed their course and 10% achieved partial success in their studies. 33.5% (698) of the students who disclosed a disability received additional learning support from the Learning Development team and from the curriculum staff. The data in this review captured full and part time students. Full details of the success of students under the full range of disclosed protected characteristics are contained in the report. (See Appendix 1)

The data were drilled down further to produce outcomes for full-time students only, to allow a comparison to be made against the College’s equalities data report on disclosed disabilities and success. The data capture of additional learning support for full-time students who disclosed disabilities showed that 61.4% of the students successfully completed their course and 11.5% achieved partial success in their studies.
The College’s equalities data baseline report AY 2015-16 concluded that 62.4% of students disclosing a disability successfully completed their course and 12.3% achieved partial success. These data are captured for full time students only.

**General Observations**

- Students with a disclosed disability receiving additional support are less likely to complete successfully than those who do not have a disability. In spite of having support, their achievement is still 11.3% less (in terms of complete success) than students with no disability.
- It would however be assumed that the additional learning support provided to the 61.4% of students who did successfully complete their course, assisted in their achievement.

Equality and diversity is embedded in all aspects of Student Services. All staff are fully aware of the importance of applying effective equality and diversity practices to ensure this is mainstreamed seamlessly in all operations and behaviours. Student Services offer a student-centred service and by doing so, take on board the views of all students regarding the range of services we provide. Evaluation of student feedback is the basis for quality improvement and this is analysed by the managers throughout the year.

Managers and staff review and evaluate policies, procedures and practices which are under the Student Services remit, to ensure that equalities issues are central to - and fully embedded in - everything we do. For example, the policy Promoting & Supporting Learning for Looked after Young People and Care Leavers was created to support transition into College and ensure success in reaching educational goals. Equality Impact Assessments have also been applied to all policies and procedures.
Examples of Mainstreaming in Student Services:

Partnerships

It is crucial when engaging with the most vulnerable groups within our communities that we work with local partners to provide the most appropriate advice and guidance. All learning support staff have established networks with external agencies. This has facilitated the sharing of information and resources and made referral easier.

The work of the LDT is crucial to the work of the College in supporting transitions. The Partnership Matters agreement plays a key role in the management of multi-agency support requirements for vulnerable students. The Head of Student Services and the Learning Support Manager both regularly attend Partnership Matters meetings.

The purpose of the local partnership agreement is to ensure:

- all partners recognise, understand and respect the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies that provide support
- on-going discussion about the provision of support
- commitment to working in partnership to ensure provision of that support.

The local partnership meets on a regular basis and works together to identify and develop strategic solutions to ensure the provision of appropriate support for children, young people and adults so they can access further and higher education. The local partnership will further develop processes and protocols for considering individual cases where required. The overall ambition of the local partnership is to ensure children, young people and adults have the opportunity to access learning opportunities within further and higher education as appropriate within the context of career progression pathway.

The collaboration provides significant input from a wide range of stakeholders to look strategically at the barriers, support provision and outcomes for children and young people across all protected characteristics. (See Appendix 2)

Promotion of Support Services to Partners
The Learning Development Team sent out an information leaflet to external stakeholders, schools, social work departments; educational psychologists; care facilities; Skills Development Scotland; Who Cares? Scotland etc. to ensure that as wide an audience as possible was aware of the support provision available.

This promotes early support interventions and enables transitions for students – both for those with a protected characteristic as well as for those who do not share a protected characteristic. (See appendix 3)

**Examples of Transition Events**

**CE Transition Days**

The LDT have worked with a range of internal and external partners to promote college transitions. Two Transition Days were held in June 2016, at both Aberdeen City and Fraserburgh campuses. Applicants were informed that they could be accompanied at the event by a family member/parent/friend or support worker. 5 applicants attended the Aberdeen City event and 5 applicants attended the Fraserburgh event. Support workers also came along to both campuses. Applicants at both events were given information and advice on the LDT support that would be available to them at College, as well as funding information and information from Guidance staff. A tour of the campus was included on each day as well as ice-breaker activities, to provide the opportunity to get to know each other.

Reports overall have been positive from both the students and the support workers and it was felt that it has helped to prepare them for coming to College.
Student feedback examples:
“Learning more about the College and feeling more confident about starting”

“It was interesting to find out about the help that is available in College and having a look round”

“I feel like I know where people are if I need help or get lost”

Key Worker feedback example:
“Today’s event was very informative. It was presented well by all staff. Everyone made the young people feel welcome and appeared very approachable”

Student Ambassadors, who themselves are care experienced, attended the events to provide an insight into college life and to promote the support available to them.

Westhill Academy Transition Visit

Staff at Student Services were contacted by an additional support teacher at Westhill Academy to request a visit for 5 students who were considering coming to the College. A mini supported-transition event was arranged for the senior pupils who were able to attend, all of whom have applied for and/or are considering coming to College.

Co-ordinated by the LDT but in collaboration with the Information and Advice Team and the Guidance Tutors, short information and Q&A sessions were arranged to discuss the pupil’s chosen courses, their transition to the College environment, pre-entry funding and the funding application process.

An overview of the support available from the LDT was also delivered. A targeted tour of the College facilities was also provided. The pupils and their teacher were gifted a NESCol goody-bag containing lots of useful information and helpful contact details.

Feedback following the event was very positive:
“Thank you very much for this morning. All... pupils have come away with a very positive feeling about college.”

Talks concerning future networking events are already underway. The event demonstrated effective supported transition, with a holistic approach between departments enabling this meaningful engagement.

**LDT Summer Transition Days**

A new programme of summer transition days was delivered by the LDT to help prepare students with additional needs/anxieties for the transition into the College environment. Invitations were sent to those students whom it was felt would benefit from this support. This is the first programme to be provided over the summer period and analysis of participant feedback provided the rationale to continue this over the summer in AY 2016-17.

The Transition Days were delivered on the 11th July 2016: a total of 5 students attended across Aberdeen City and Fraserburgh campuses; 10 prospective students attended across both campuses on the 19th July 2016; and 13 attended on the 12th August. Each day ran from 10.00 – 15.30 with a break for lunch.

Attendees at the Transition Days were given advice on organisational skills, demonstrations of Blackboard as well as various applications and assistive technology which they may find useful at College. In addition, they were given the opportunity to take part in ice-breaker and team-building exercises. Attendees at both campuses were also given a tour of the building.

LDT staff feel that not only have the activities been well received but that the events have also been successful as a means of helping the applicants to network, thus aiding their transition into College.
**Student feedback examples:**

“I better understand the building and feel comfortable” and “It was very helpful, fun, I’ve a good knowledge of the Aberdeen city campus now”

“I feel like I got to say what was worrying me and now I know studying techniques and about blackboard”

“I feel more confident walking around the campus and I now know key areas and how things work here”

**Supporting Transitions to College**

Staff from Supporting Children in Learning for Life (SCILL) contacted the College to ask if representatives from the Learning Development Team could attend some of their sessions to talk about North East Scotland College’s learning support provision for students. SCILL is a Scottish charity and its members are made up of parents, carers, and education and health professionals. Transitions as well as support for students with additional support needs were covered at the sessions.

Two Inclusiveness & Study Skills Co-ordinators (ICs) attended a session on the 3rd October 2016 to discuss transitions and support for pupils at Banchory Academy. The ICs provided an overview of the support the College offer and interacted with pupils and parents, taking questions and answering queries. The College facilitated a similar event on the 9th November 2016 to discuss transitions from Inverurie Academy.

Participation at the event supports Partnership Matters, the Local Partnership Agreement, and the College’s approach to Access and Equality.
Regional Partnership with Local Universities - Transitions

The College has established a regional partnership with Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen to support care experienced applicants and students in Further and Higher Education. All three partners work together to an agreed framework that is reviewed at regular intervals. Each partner contributes resources, develops good practice and contributes towards a holistic model of support for care experienced students. At Appendix 9 is the Care Experienced Annual Review Report.

The partners have identified the following as its joint corporate parenting responsibilities in relation to its care experienced students:

- Work jointly to raise the aspirations and support the transitions of care experienced individuals/students.
- Each of the three institutions’ affiliated student’s associations will work together to offer support to care experienced students as well as to raise awareness.
- The three partners are committed to attending regular meetings to review and augment the agreed framework.
- The three partners will implement a joint approach to dealing with matters that may adversely affect the wellbeing of their care experienced students.
- Create joint opportunities which will promote the wellbeing of care experienced students.
- Take positive action to help students access these opportunities and make use of the service and support provided across all 3 organisations.
- Work in close co-operation with partners where it is regarded as promoting the interests of those students.
- Work at a national level with CELCIS, WhoCares? Scotland and other relevant partners.
Mental Health and Wellbeing

The College recognised that mental health issues were becoming a significant area of concern and convened a Mental Health Working Group in AY 2015-16. The group developed an action plan to support our students, which was implemented at the start of AY 2016-17. The working group consulted with a range of stakeholders, including students, to develop clear actions and strategies that would be utilised within the College.

Work completed to date:

The College now has a designated team of Mental Health First Aiders to provide support in the event of a mental health emergency or crisis situation. The function of the Mental Health First Aiders is to provide support when students are experiencing serious symptoms which require immediate support. These are situations in which the student needs to be removed from their classroom or where the student is seriously distressed and where the member of staff who is their first point of contact is unable to support them. Examples might include the following:

- Panic attacks

Examples of Regional Good Practice

- All three institutions participated in a joint presentation and panel interview at Capita’s Improving Outcomes for Looked after Children and Young People Conference, 26th November 2015, Edinburgh. The presentation focused on the regional approach to supporting transitions from FE to HE.
- Partnership working with the new Virtual School Head Teacher, whose role is to co-ordinate provision for care experienced children in the city. This is the first role of its kind in Scotland.
- Joint work with the Local Authorities to further the corporate parenting agenda.
- Participation in the joint working group supporting the care experienced in Aberdeenshire.
Psychotic episodes
Severe episodes of anxiety or depression leading the student’s behaviour to cause concern to those around them
Students harming themselves and / or indicating that they may be considering suicide

The College developed a set of Mental Health First Aid Guidelines that are available for all staff to access. The Guidelines provide contact details and information to support the referral of a student to a Mental Health First Aider.

The College developed a ‘Tips for Teaching Staff – Supporting Students with Poor Mental Health’ document to provide information to assist staff should they be required to deal with students with mental health issues.

A new Mental Health & Wellbeing area has been created on StudentNet, an area designated to students, to provide key information, guidance and support. This will be updated on a regular basis and will promote any internal and/or external events that are delivered throughout the academic session. A substantial range of useful links and information relating to mental health & wellbeing is provided.

During November, December and January we had a total of 1068 hits on the Mental Health & Wellbeing sites, 690 in November; 255 December and 148 in January AY 2016-17. This data will form baseline figures for future analysis of trends.

**NESCol Students’ Association**

The Students’ Association (SA) has undergone significant change during the period covered by this report. The SA is working hard to deliver the Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students’ Association, so the College and the SA work together to enable students to represent themselves and create positive change. Going forward, the SA will be in a strong position to support the College in the meeting the “three needs”.

Equality and Diversity is one of the Student Association’s core values and this is reflected in there being two Equality and Diversity Executive Officer posts out of the 11 posts available in our Executive structure. These Executives officers will be given
the opportunity to attend the annual NUS liberation conferences which promote Equality and Diversity in the Liberation areas. Our election policy allows students to apply regardless of their characteristics unless the posts requires that the student self-defines and the applicant will be determined on that basis. We ensure that any literature we use promotes Equality and Diversity and our sources are always those that promote and share our values i.e. NUS /College/Health Organisations etc.

Our Student Association Sabbatical Officers are invited by the College to attend and contribute to committees on Access, Inclusion and Equality and we have been invited to submit items from our own events to an Equalities Calendar.

As part of our own Calendar of events Officers are keen to promote awareness raising activities surrounding e.g. LGBT Awareness, Mental Health and Health Awareness, International Women’s Day etc.

In delivering our Freshers’ Fairs we invited Four Pillars (LGBT), Grampian Racial Equality Commission, SAMH, NHS and People First to help promote and raise awareness on Equality and Diversity related issues. Not at all agencies could attend but the invitation reflects our commitment to promote and raise awareness of Equality and Diversity.

Our role in Class Rep training ensures that candidates are democratically elected and taken from the whole student population, regardless of protected characteristic.

When delivering training we use - or adapt- the bespoke materials that have been designed by Sparqs to deliver to mainstream, additional support needs and Eusol Groups.

We ran 5 induction sessions in October /November, tailored to the needs of our students in Learning Opportunities and these sessions were well received.

Last session, our Sabbatical Officer took in part in a Multi-Cultural events “Celebrating the difference” on Fraserburgh Campus as part of a wider community festival.

One of our Sabbatical Officers attended an event, in conjunction with our colleagues in Learning Development Team, to look at raising awareness of Care Experienced and also to look at how Student Associates could raise awareness with Student Body. This project is on-going.
Our Association Sabbatical Officers and staff were recently invited to participate in College-wide development activities and attended sessions on Transgender Awareness, Interfaith Awareness, Mental Health Awareness and Beyond the Label (promoting equality).

The Association also made the student body aware of a recent NUS Transgender conference and offered to pay transport costs for those attending the event.

**Mainstreaming Equality in the Curriculum**

North East Scotland College is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible curriculum which is student-centred and provides flexible access and exit points to positive destinations. To that end, a variety of policies and procedures are implemented to support access and equality of opportunity within the students’ chosen programmes and in their wider College experience. Work is undertaken with partners to support transitions for identified vulnerable groups both into and from the College.

Staff are well trained with respect to Equalities and are experienced in making reasonable adjustments to accommodate specific needs. In some instances these needs are formally assessed and identified by support organisations or by the College’s own additional needs assessment team but in many cases support and adjustments are made by staff who recognise these needs as they become apparent or they are identified by the student.

Our staff are well equipped and trained to use a wide range of teaching styles that help to cater for differing learning needs. This means that a range of approaches can be taken to differentiate learning to meet the needs of individuals and specific groups.

Equality Impact Assessments are also carried out on policies and procedures to ensure these meet the general needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty, or that mitigation can be put in place where this is required. Managers are also aware of the need to consider Equality Impact Assessments for key decisions affecting the curriculum such as changes to units or introduction of work placements.
Quality assurance activities continuously monitor compliance and satisfaction in relation to Equality and Diversity. Feedback from activities such as focus groups, internal audits and surveys is positive with respect to equalities. Measures are in place to facilitate giving students an equal opportunity to succeed and to ensure that good relations are promoted among diverse groups.

**Curriculum Base Line Equality Data Analysis**

At Appendix 3 is the full Equalities Base Line Data Report for the Curriculum. Number of enrolments, withdrawals, successful and partially successful completions were reviewed based on protected characteristics for full-time students in 2015-16. This report provides evidence with respect to accessibility of courses and suggests that representation is generally reflective of the regional population.

Only one characteristic was considered at each stage of the analysis e.g. age or sex but no analysis has been conducted on combined data taking into account both characteristics.

Overall College data are presented, along with a breakdown by School. Data is also available at team and course level (not included in this report) and this will be used to furnish more detailed analysis at that level.

Data is presented for the following characteristics:

1. Sex
2. Disability
3. Age
4. Sexual Orientation
5. Ethnicity

This data has been used to set the College’s new Equality Outcomes.

At Appendix 4 is the Curriculum Equalities Baseline Data Report – Representation. This demonstrates the following:

- Overall the gender balance in the College is representative of the region
- The percentage of students declaring one or more disabilities matches the proportion in Aberdeen City but these data are not directly comparable.
The age distribution of the College is not representative of the City as a whole but a bias towards young people undertaking qualifications is to be expected.

The data indicate that the LGBT population is under-represented in the College but this has to be taken in the context that a significant number of students prefer not to reveal their sexual orientation.

A higher proportion of ethnic minorities are represented in the College than in the region 22%:8%.

Annual review of the data will continue so progress can be monitored. A review of the applications process is planned and will allow a deeper evaluation of the accessibility of programmes, especially to those in “hard to reach” groups. The availability of more and improved equality data has also meant that the College is better able to target support and adapt the management of areas with most need, for example to courses with higher numbers of students with a declared disability.

The College is also involved in broader societal issues of gender imbalance and has some activities in place to try to narrow the gender gap in some specific subject areas such as Engineering, Care and Computing.

The following examples offer evidence of how equality is mainstreamed in the curriculum, as well as how the College is meeting the general needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Examples of Mainstreaming in the Curriculum Areas

Girls into Engineering
At North East Scotland College, there is a significant gender imbalance on engineering courses, with only 9% of full-time engineering students being female (2015-16). Females on the courses, however, are more likely to complete and succeed than the males (success rate for males is 71%; success rate for females is 77%). The lack of females therefore represents a huge loss of potential talent to the profession.
In order to try to break down some of the barriers preventing females from applying for engineering courses, the College has worked with industry partners over a number of years. The initiatives have been designed for secondary school pupils in the form of the Schools Technology Challenge and the “Girls into Energy” programmes and have been generously supported by Shell UK and Score Group plc in the current academic year.

The Schools Technology Challenge is available annually for S2 pupils. Each participating team consists of one male and one female pupil who work collaboratively to develop solutions to the set challenge. Participating schools have their own heats and the winners of each represent their school at the Grand Final held at the College’s Fraserburgh Campus.

The challenge allows school pupils of both genders to develop their skills but also to engage with industry partners to gain an insight into careers in engineering and technology. They also have an opportunity to see the College facilities and learn about the range of courses on offer. In this way they engage with the subject in an entertaining and rewarding manner whilst also dispelling some of the popular misconceptions about the industry and the types of career it can offer.

The “Girls into Energy” programme is a more extensive experience and is designed to allow older school pupils an introduction to engineering and technologies in exclusively female groups. The course is an SQA Skills for Work accredited qualification which covers various aspects of energy generation and also involves opportunities for work placement and industry visits. S3, S4 or S5 pupils are enrolled in groups from participating schools. Students are able to talk directly with women who are working in different roles across various companies within the oil and gas and renewables sectors. The programmes are very successful in developing the skills and confidence of the females with respect to careers in engineering but also in the broader energy generation industry. Of the 69 enrolments in 2015-16, 96% completed the qualification successfully.

Creative Industries
Ages of full-time students in Art & Design at ACC in 15/16 ranged from 15 (early school leavers) to those in their 60s, all working together but bringing different experiences and skills to the classroom. Staff and students fully accepted and valued the fact that they all have different skills and students are encouraged to work together to gain the benefits of different skillsets and experience. At least 16 different nationalities were represented this year, creating a great wealth of diversity that students are able to tap into and from which they can derive creative ideas.

**Art & Design**

Transitioning students are welcomed and accepted by staff and students. Staff are very pro-active when it comes to gender issues and we actively promote a culture of acceptance and zero tolerance to discrimination in the department. Staff are familiar enough with the issues to consult with the individuals about appropriate pronouns to be used and to support flexibility in naming as we find this can often change quite quickly. Where there are opportunities to discuss gender issues in the context of a lesson, then we take this opportunity and use it to widen the citizenship experience for our candidates.

**Computing and Business Enterprise**

The Introductory level courses in Computing at Aberdeen City Campus (ACC) have always proved popular with students progressing from supported programmes. The Faculty has had great success over 15/16 with one student achieving the course Learner of the Year.

In relation to Events Management at ACC whenever reference is made to industry roles, both male and female role models are used. The Behavioural Skills for Business unit has a particular focus on management and leadership skills and a focus on equality. We deliberately address and challenge stereotypes from the start of the course and use a range of positive role models from both sexes.

Throughout Travel and Tourism courses learning and assessment materials are designed to provide equality of opportunity in relation to differing learning styles and levels of academic ability.
There is progression from Supported Programs as we have students who are in mainstream classes who have come from supported programs.

**Music & Performing Arts**

The music team at Aberdeen City Campus created a ‘mixed ensemble’ to allow students of all levels of ability to participate in music-making activities. Music contributions are led by a designated member of staff who identifies an appropriate part for each member to play so that they can make an important contribution to the overall piece. The ‘Mixed Ensemble’ is open to students and staff from across the College with inclusivity at the heart of its ethos. The benefits of music-making are well documented. Sarah Glynn produced an article for ‘Medical News Today’ entitled “Music Benefits Both Mental and Physical Health” which explains why music reduces levels of stress and anxiety, and also has positive effects on the immune system thus improving physical health. The ensemble uses music representing a range of styles allowing participants to engage with music from different cultures and sub-subcultures, promoting empathy, understanding and tolerance. The culture of the group is about supporting one-another and working towards common goals.

**Sport**

We enrol learners across a wide age range and there is an even gender balance. Enrolments were, historically, predominantly male, but this has changed – in part due to the integration of the female profiles used in the prospectus of successful sporting students, following the legacy of London 2012 and Glasgow 2015. We have learners across a large age range with school entrants as young as 15 years and our more mature entrants of 45-50 years old.

Students from a range of courses have used the services offered by Learning Development Centre so that appropriate adjustments can be made to learning and assessment arrangements e.g. the use of a scribe, additional time or a laptop, depending on the needs of the individual.
ESOL (English for the Speakers of Other Languages)

The main aim of the ESOL course is to help migrant workers and/or their family members who choose to live and work in Scotland:

- Integrate into the Scottish culture,
- Become confident individuals,
- Be aware of their right and responsibilities as citizens
- Contribute to society

In addition to improving their language skills, we offer our learners the opportunity to study in the mainstream courses offered at the College. Also, by providing Employability and Enterprise units in the Programmes of Study we enable students to find jobs where they can utilise their previous qualifications and skills.

Learner Destinations:

- 70% Continue studying in HE or FE
- 24% Employment
- 4% Return to home country
- 2% Other

Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy

Ages of full-time students in Beauty Therapy 2016-2017 range from 15 years old to 50 years old. Older students have integrated well into their level of study, work very well together with the younger students and are well respected by their peers. The age mix has been very advantageous for the younger students, especially with respect to gaining improved communication skills and respect.

Students who have severe anxiety are fully supported within the class and teaching staff have liaised with support teams to ensure they are aware of measures which can be taken when they have an episode. This support has enabled students – who would otherwise not have managed - to progress to the stage where they are now able to enter competitions.
In some cases where students have had particular needs identified, we have sought permission from the students to share some information with classmates in relation to their circumstances. As a result, we have been able to discuss some issues with peers. This is useful for everyone in promoting awareness and positive relations, as many of the students have otherwise insufficient experience or understanding to enable them to appreciate why some people are treated differently.

Reasonable adjustments have also been made:

- To accommodate religious beliefs and enable female students to participate fully in their hairdressing studies without any impact on modesty and privacy, where adult males may be present in the working environment.

- To accommodate wheelchair-bound students studying Beauty. The adjustments include providing individual cupboards and beauty beds have been swapped around to accommodate the wheelchair.

Flexible timetables have been set up for students studying Hairdressing to address the childcare needs which have been impacting on their attendance/progression. This has improved their attendance and has eased their worries about missing demonstrations and skills development sessions. “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) has also been utilised by these students to improve access to their resources and materials for their theory work on the course.

**Learning Opportunities: Supported Learning**

The Learning Opportunities team takes “wrap-around” approach to student welfare in order to support students experiencing difficulties.

A holistic approach was taken to supporting a student with additional needs who faced a number of exceptional circumstances, which in turn impacted on their ability to attend College. There was academic and pastoral support as well as communication with outside agencies. As a consequence of this, the student was able to complete their course, gain their qualification and ultimately secure employment.
Restart: College Study and Employment

This course acts as a stepping stone for moving on to further study at college or employment. It is primarily aimed at those who have a lack of qualifications from school or those who want to return to education. The course allows students to develop the confidence and skills needed for successful progression.

The course covers a broad range of skills in communication, IT and enterprise. It helps students develop their creativity, their ability to work effectively with others and their understanding of human behaviour and society. The variety of subjects covered means they undergo significant personal development, ensuring that they will be well-equipped to take the next step, which may be into a mainstream College course or into employment.
Quality and Equality

The College takes steps to ensure that it actively advances equality, diversity and inclusion for students as part of curriculum delivery, through learning and teaching approaches as well as guidance and support. Two key drivers for this are the collection and analysis of student feedback and student data.

Student Feedback

Student feedback is collected in a number of ways throughout each academic year. Two approaches, which include a focus on equality and diversity, are student surveys and student focus groups.

The College’s First Impressions Survey in 2015-16 included the question ‘All students are treated fairly’. The positive response rate for this question was 97%, an increase of 3% on the previous year. The positive response rate was then maintained at 97% in 2016-17. The College’s Satisfaction Survey in 2015-16 included the question ‘I believe all students at the College are treated equally and fairly by staff’. Amongst full-time students, the positive response rate was 80%. At the time of writing the Satisfaction Survey for 2016-17 had not been undertaken.

Equality monitoring data is requested along with survey responses. This allows the College to monitor satisfaction levels by protected characteristic. This has provided evidence which can be used to identify service improvements.

During each academic year, the College facilitates a number of student focus groups based on agreed themes. During 2016-17, one theme is equality and diversity. These focus groups enable the College to explore both students’ views on equality and diversity and the College’s approach to promoting a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

To date, positive feedback from these focus groups has highlighted that the majority of students feel that the College is inclusive with a diverse range of students and that staff treat students with dignity and respect. The discussions have also demonstrated that there is good general awareness amongst students of the meaning of equality and diversity.
However, there was some mixed feedback in relation to the imagery used by the College around the Campuses and in its publication – many students said that the images used reflect a diverse range of students in terms of race and age, but some noted that images of disabled people were lacking and in some curriculum areas images seemed to follow gender stereotypes. As outlined below, the College will address these points.

Discussions at the focus groups have also helped to increase student awareness of their own behaviours, for example, one group acknowledged that some of their classroom ‘banter’ could be perceived as offensive by those from some protected characteristic groups.

Actions which have been identified to date from the focus groups include a review of the images currently on display across the Campuses to further promote inclusiveness; consideration of how employability skills could be improved to include an awareness of appropriate communication methods to avoid unintentional offence e.g. to address inappropriate classroom ‘banter’; and a review of learning materials to ensure that opportunities are taken to promote inclusiveness wherever possible.

**Student Data**

The College’s Self-evaluation Report for 2015-16 identified the following as a key action point:

“NESCol will look to improve the collection, reporting and use of data across all protected characteristics for both staff and students, taking the relevant actions identified, to advance equality of opportunity and meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.”

In response to the above the College has developed a suite of diversity reports on Launchpad - a Capita/Unit-e product. These reports enable key College staff, including Heads of School, Faculty Managers and Curriculum & Quality Managers, and members of the Equality & Diversity Strategy Group, to access, monitor and analyse information relating to applications, enrolments and applications
converting to enrolments by age; gender; disability; religious belief, and sexual orientation. The reports can be produced at College, School, Team and Course level enabling general College-wide observations to be made alongside the exploration of specific areas to address any areas of potential concern or those which demonstrate good practice.

This is the first time the College has had access to such detailed information on the protected characteristics of students and as such consideration of how best to use the data needs to be undertaken.

Curriculum teams now also have access to Performance Indicator data such as early withdrawal, further withdrawal, partial success and success by protected characteristic which will enable targeted to be identified and implemented.

**Quality Processes**

The following describes a number of other quality processes which involve the consideration of equality and diversity issues.

Lesson observations include consideration of Equality and Diversity and inclusion in the teaching environment. A revised approach to observation has allowed a further opportunity to mainstream by noting good practice in equalities-related activity and/or naturally-occurring missed opportunities to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations.

Self-evaluation reports ask curriculum teams to comment on the integration of equality and diversity into learning and teaching. Monitoring has indicated that there is a clear understanding with respect to discrimination but a poorer level of recording of promotion of good relations and equalising opportunity. This has signposted a further training need. As noted above the recent availability of student data relating to protected characteristics will enable equality and diversity to be meaningfully considered as part of the self-evaluation process going forward. Support Teams are asked to comment in their self-evaluation reports on how they embed the promotion of equality and diversity into their operations and behaviours. At the time of writing the College is reviewing its approach to self-evaluation to
reflect the new quality framework ‘How good is our college’ and will ensure that the revised reports include analysis in relation to section 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

The College conducts approval activities for new courses and regular internal audits on teaching packs and processes. As part of these processes, staff are required to demonstrate how they meet the needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Materials are also checked to ensure there is no discriminatory bias.
College Equality & Diversity Events

A number of events are organised thought the year to highlight and promote topics relating to Equality and Diversity. These are organised through partnerships, the Student Association, individual students or by College staff.

Examples of Events to Promote Equality & Diversity

Celebrate the Difference
The College hosted a free family fun day in September 2016 to promote equality and diversity.

[Image of people dancing]

The charity event is organised by a number of local organisations, and is designed to challenge perceptions and reduce discrimination in our diverse community. The event brings together people from a range of different backgrounds.

Attractions at the fun day included: dancing and drumming workshops, Latvian and Lithuanian dancing, Thai dancing, belly dancing, entertainment from local music groups and delicious food samples from around the world!

Plasma Screen Presentations
The College uses its plasma screens in shared spaces to promote a variety of topics in relation to health and equality and diversity. These presentations help raise awareness and support the College’s Vision and Values with respect to Equality and Diversity. Recent presentation topics have included:

- Dyslexia Awareness Week
• National Stress Awareness Day
• World Aids Day
• Holocaust Memorial Day
• Chinese New Year
• Down’s Syndrome Awareness Day
• Holi
• Mental Health Day (event by MADE)
• Epilepsy Awareness Week
• Mental Health Awareness Week
• Prevent Suicide
• World Suicide Prevention Day
• Sexual Health Week

**Student Events**

There were visits by Dee Jay Bullock from Gay Men’s (now Four Pillars) Health on Campus who also attended the Freshers’ Fair as part of LGBT /Health.

LGBT History month was promoted throughout the College.

**Holocaust Educational Trust Visit**

Social Science students took part in a study tour to Auschwitz/ Birkenau in November 2016 with the help of sponsorship from the Holocaust Educational Trust (HET) and North East Scotland College.

The trip had a profound effect on these students and as a result of their participation, the students have become HET Ambassadors in their communities and look to raise awareness of the Holocaust and the importance challenging prejudice today.

The students gave a presentation on the impact the visit has had upon them at the Aberdeen City Campus in order to share their experience and the lessons learned as a result.
Staff Equality

The Human Resources team is committed to equality and diversity throughout the staff employment cycle. This includes ensuring that there is no inadvertent discrimination at any point from the recruitment stage through to retention. HR is also committed to fostering good relations between staff who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Consequently, an analysis of staff data (including recruitment and retention data) has been conducted across all protected characteristics.

Attached at Appendix 5 is a detailed staff equality profile report, for which there is also an Executive Summary.

This report presents an equality profile of College staff as at the end of December 2016 and is compared with data as at end December 2015. Some of the main findings are detailed below.
Findings:

- The College employs more women (328; 56.1% in 2016) than men (257; 43.9% in 2016), with more women working part-time (22.9%) than men (5.3%)

- The age profile of staff has remained fairly constant with the majority of staff being in the 30-44 and 45-59 groups

- Following actions taken by the College to address the non-disclosure of protected characteristics by staff:
  - Ethnicity non-disclosure fell from 13% (of overall headcount) in 2015 to 8% in 2016
  - Disability non-disclosure fell from 15.3% in 2015 to 9.2% in 2016
  - Religion/belief non-disclosure fell from 31.3% in 2015 to 21.0% in 2016
  - Marital status non-disclosure fell from 9.8% in 2015 to 4.6% in 2016
  - Sexual orientation non-disclosure fell from 35.4% in 2015 to 20.2% in 2016

- More women left the College in 2016 (69.6%) than men (30.4%)

- As regards staff recruitment, (of those disclosing their gender) the College receives more applications from women (62.2%) than men (36.6%) and both shortlists and recruits more women than men.

- The College appoints more people (94.6% of appointments) from a White ethnic category than either apply (84.7% of applications) or are shortlisted (85.1%).

- Fewer people from a BME ethnic category were appointed (5.4% of appointments) than apply (12.3% of applications) or are shortlisted (12.1% of those shortlisted).

- Fewer applicants disclosed their disability status (14.9% of applications did not disclose their status) than staff (9.2% of College staff did not disclose their status)
The information and findings contained in the report will be addressed via an action plan, to cover both actions arising from this report and to tie in with actions from the College’s gender pay gap report and occupational segregation analyses thus enabling the delivery of the College’s new Equality Outcomes.

Examples of mainstreaming equality for staff

Enhanced Parental Leave

The College has taken the decision to offer enhanced pay to cover all forms of parental leave including maternity, adoption, paternity and/or shared parental leave. This means that all staff regardless of gender or sexual orientation can benefit from up to 13 weeks of enhanced pay and puts the College in line with other forward thinking organisations who recognise that offering such benefits eliminates inequality and adds real value to the employment package.

Disability Confident Employer

The College obtained Disability Confident Employer status during 2016, to demonstrate its commitment to employing and retaining people with a disability.

This means that the College offers, amongst other things, interviews to people with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for the job and reasonable adjustments where required.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

In 2016, the College re-issued its Equal Opportunities forms to staff, but this time included explanations as to why it is important to disclose protected characteristics. A further document explained what constituted a disability. It was also explained that if a member of staff had a disability, the College would work with Occupational Health to see if it could make any reasonable adjustments to support them. There was a further option for staff to have a confidential discussion with HR about any disability-related adjustments that could made. The aim of these activities was to let staff know that help and support would be available to them if they had an impairment.

As a consequence of this, the number of staff indicating that they have a disability increased from 4.7% to 7.5% and five members of staff requested – and have had
meetings with HR. A further consequence is that HR is now looking to improve its videoconferencing facilities for staff with hearing impairments.

**WRAP Initiative**

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is a preventative technique developed and recommended by the NHS in order to proactively support individuals with mental health difficulties. When in a well state of mind the individual will help develop this proactive plan with their manager/student services. The College has developed specific guidelines for NESCol employees and the HR department has also worked in conjunction with the Head of Student Services in order to develop a template which is suitable for students.

In relation to this both the HR department and Student Services have developed areas on the NESCol’s intranet and Blackboard providing information and guidelines on additional support for those with various mental health difficulties depending on the trigger.

**Organisational Development**

North East Scotland College is committed to providing training and development for all staff. This commences with an in-depth induction programme as soon as a new colleague joins the College. As staff progress throughout their career we encourage them to take advantage of the many development opportunities on offer so that they can keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date. For some positions this will include completing professional qualifications and awards.

It is our intention to provide a service which is accessible to all members of staff. We therefore monitor attendance and seek feedback so that any barriers to development can be removed.

The Organisational Development Team monitor applications for and attendance at both internal and external training courses, by protected characteristic. We also monitor the profile of staff undertaking taught courses which are required for Professional Development. The full report is at Appendix 6

The key conclusions from the report are as follows:
Everyone has equal access to training and very few applications to attend external events are refused. However, not all groups are equally engaging. For example, female staff are more likely to apply to attend external training than males. In addition Staff in the 60+ age groups tend to be less engaged with training.

Although it is not systematically measured, the data for this year suggests that there might be a difference between the take-up of training across the campuses. A rough analysis suggests the following. During 2015/16 approximately 66% of staff worked on the campuses that came under the former Aberdeen College and 34% on the campuses that came under the former Banff and Buchan College. Of the applications received for external training 73% of these came from Aberdeen campuses and 27% came from Fraserburgh Campuses. This needs to be further investigated to ensure that there is fairness in access to external training across College campuses.

**Governance and Equality**

The Board of North East Scotland College is committed to fostering a culture of equality and diversity. Board Members are aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty, specifically to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

To ensure that there is understanding and awareness of the Board’s duty, Members receive presentations on equality and diversity issues and are provided with opportunities to attend training on key issues. In June 2016, Board Members attended a training session - Promoting equality in a new landscape: the role of the governing body – provided by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). At the time of writing discussions are taking place with the ECU to arrange a further session on ‘Unconscious
Bias’. Attendance at both internal and external training and development opportunities continues to be encouraged. The Board is also kept up to date with any new developments in equality and diversity relevant to its work.

The Board participates in the consultation process for the College’s Equality Outcomes with full discussion as part of Board agendas. The Board and its Human Recourses, and Learning & Teaching and Student Services Committees also regularly monitor progress against the Equality Outcomes. Information on protected characteristics of both staff and students is also considered at relevant Committee Meetings as well as key policy issues such as the College’s Equal Pay Statement, Gender Pay Gap Report and Occupational Segregation Reports.

To demonstrate its commitment to equality and diversity the Board appointed its first Equality and Diversity Champion in June 2016. The key objectives of the role are to:

- To help ensure that the Board observes good practice in regard to equality and diversity;
- To further embed equality and diversity in the Board’s strategic and decision-making processes
- To help ensure that the Board complies with its legal obligations in regard to equality and diversity and meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

In undertaking this role, the Champion will:

- Attend meetings of the College’s Equality and Diversity Strategy Group, as appropriate, to ensure that there is effective communication between the Group and the Board of Management
- Participate in reviews of key College documentation relating to equality and diversity, such as the Equality Outcomes and the Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Attend equality and diversity training and briefings, in addition to those provided to the Board as a whole, to disseminate knowledge gained to other Board Members and to advise if changes to Board practices should be considered.
The Board’s Governance Steering Group is currently reviewing its selection and appointment process as well as its approach to succession planning to ensure that Members’ ambition for a diverse governing body is fulfilled.

Discussions at the Governance Steering Group have involved reaffirming a commitment to take positive action in recruitment. Actions to support this include communicating the intention of the Board to increase its diversity to key stakeholders in the region, especially to organisations with a focus relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. Work will also be undertaken to demystify the role of a Board Member and to publicise the benefits of being a Member. This will include engaging with local and regional employers to emphasise the professional development benefits of Board positions and engaging with communities to raise awareness of the regional role and impact of the College. The Board will also engage with relevant equalities organisations to seek their advice on outreach and addressing potential barriers to participation.

The Board undertakes equality monitoring as part of its established processes and considers the range of protected characteristics represented on the Board ahead of and during the recruitment and selection of members.
The Board’s current gender balance is

<table>
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<th>Board of Management</th>
<th>Non-Executive Board Members</th>
<th>Staff Board Members (including Principal)</th>
<th>Student Board Members</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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Please note that at the time of writing the Board has one Non-executive Board Member vacancy and Staff Board Member vacancy.

**Procurement**

The College’s Procurement policies and procedures ensure that we only contract with organisations that demonstrate a commitment to promoting equality and diversity. All procurement contracts for services include statements relating to the College’s public sector equality duties and the need for contractors to demonstrate support of these and all are provided with an Equality and Diversity briefing as part of their induction. This outlines the College policy and the application of such to the contractors. They are therefore clear on expectations and requirements.

**Equality Impact Assessments**

During the previous two academic years (2014/15 and 2015/16) a NESCot Equality Impact Assessment Template was designed and all managers were trained to carry out Equality Impact Assessments. Action was taken across the College to ensure that Equality Impact Assessments were completed on policies, procedures and practices. Policies, procedures and their associated EIAs are published on the College’s website as appropriate.

During the autumn term (2016) a subgroup of the Staff Equality Group met to look at a small sample of Equality Impact Assessments to see how effectively they were being completed.

There is some variation in completion with some EIAs showing very good consideration of potential impact, and some are well evidenced. However, this was not the case for all of those sampled and more needs to be done to support managers with writing EIAs.
A further audit is due to take place in March 2017 and once this is completed some sample documents will be created and made available so that managers have a point of reference when completing EIAs. Individual support will also be offered.
Equality Outcomes 2015-17

Where we were then...

The 2015 Equalities Mainstreaming Report was produced after a sustained period of transformational change for the College following merger. It was not possible at that time to produce a meaningful set of Equality Outcomes due to insufficient data and the need to put proper equality reporting structures and groups in place.

Therefore, further in-depth work was required to identify the key areas for improvement and the actions that needed to be put in place. This took some time and therefore it was not possible to finally agree outcomes and actions until February 2016 although work was already well underway in the key areas identified.

These were:

- Improving Data
- Improving the Experience
- Advancing Engagement
- Advancing Knowledge

There was a set of key actions identified under each key area.

Where we are now ...

Attached at Appendix 7 is the Equality Outcomes Action Plan: Progress Report, which highlights progress against the key actions. Below is some narrative and case studies to demonstrate how we have met these outcomes and to give context to the distance travelled since merger. Other examples are found throughout this report.
Improving Our Data

(Linked to Equality Outcome Actions 1, 2, 3, 4)

A significant barrier to meeting the three needs and to setting meaningful equality outcomes was the lack of available data. With regards to staff, merger had resulted in data that could not be relied on and real difficulty in reporting effectively.

For students, although data was collected to meet SFC funding requirements there was an inconsistent approach to reporting on it. There was a growing need for curriculum teams to own and analyse their own data from school down to team and individual level. Reports on data had previously been available on request, but these reports were primarily focused on enrolled students and their attainment. Little information was collected and provided at application level, so the College was unable to provide evidence that it was meeting all of its duties in respect of the three needs.

A Data Management Group has been established and part of its responsibilities is to ensure that the College holds accurate data and that this is effectively managed. Consultation has been carried out regarding the data we collect relating to equality and diversity and a suite of reports is now available which gives information on our students, including reports on those with certain protected characteristics. Comparisons can be made between groups of students at College, School, team and course level. These reports also allow the College to track students through the application process, shows how many of our applicants enrol, gives information on when they leave and ultimately how successful these groups of students are. Data are available for a number of years, allowing trends to become apparent. Further work is required to improve how user-friendly these reports are, but a huge step forward has been taken.

The reporting and analysis of staff data has moved forward significantly. Data have been cleansed and significant work undertaken to successfully improve the disclosure of protected characteristics. A new e-recruitment system has been implemented which enables effective reporting. We are now able to report with confidence on Staff Equality, Gender Pay Gap, Occupational Segregation and Recruitment. A new HR and Payroll system is under procurement and will significantly further improve the reporting of staff data.
Advancing Engagement

Working with Partners
(linked to Equality Outcome Action 5)

Stay Safe and Carry on Cooking!
The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has started a first-of-its-kind initiative within Aberdeen City to reduce accidental fires and false alarms in sheltered housing complexes. A unique partnership between The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), North East Scotland College (NESCOL), Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership, Wiltshire Farm Foods and Cash in Your Pocket is to be rolled out in the city to promote safe cooking within Sheltered Housing properties. This partnership working will help older people live at home and still be able to cook and live independently.

NESCol Tutor Alice Lamb demonstrating cooking skills
Project Search

Project SEARCH is a one year Internship programme, based on an international model which originated in the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital in the USA, supporting young people with additional needs to gain skills and experience to go on to employment. Project SEARCH Aberdeen commenced in September 2013 and is hosted by Aberdeen University. It is delivered in partnership with North East Scotland College, Inspire (Partnership Through Life), Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities (SCLD).

The programme enables twelve Interns per year to receive support to undertake 3 work placements within the University, whilst studying to attain a vocational qualification. Upon graduation, the Interns receive support to source and sustain paid employment and at the end of the first year of the project, 11 out of 12 graduates gained employment within the Grampian area.

Project SEARCH is a one year programme, which is delivered through an on-site partnership of 3 providers:

- A supported employment provider (Inspire)
- A host employer (the University of Aberdeen)
- A training provider (North East Scotland College)

Through this approach, participants are supported to undertake 3 internships/work placements within their host employer on a full-time basis. They study to attain a vocational qualification and upon the conclusion of the programme, receive support to source and sustain paid employment.

The national unemployment rate for adults with learning disabilities is 90% and in the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council areas, there are over 1,700 individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment.

In 2013, over 23,000 enterprises were registered in Aberdeen City & Shire employing over 235,000 people. The project provides local employers with a new talent pool from which to recruit, which is particularly important in view of the current 2% unemployment rate and the ongoing frustrations of high turnover rates.
Partnership Working with Aberdeen Foyer

NESCol works in partnership with Aberdeen Foyer to deliver a range of programmes to people who have faced challenges in their lives, helping them move on from homelessness, poor health and well-being, offending backgrounds and substance misuse. By supporting them through these training programmes, individuals are given a real sense of purpose, belonging and worth and opportunities leading into steady employment often follow.

Programmes offered through this partnership include:

**Foyer REACH:** A 12 week programme based on community involvement, personal development, wellbeing and employability learning. Participants gain a City & Guilds Level 1 Certificate in Employability Skills, REHIS Food Hygiene Certificate, First Aid at Work Certificate and ASDAN Volunteering Award. Workshops focus on wellbeing and goal-setting for the future. Specific recovery support is available to those who need it, as well as peer mentoring and service user involvement opportunities.

**Prince’s Trust:** The Prince’s Trust Team is a unique development opportunity for young people aged between 16 and 25, enabling them to develop their confidence, motivation and skills through a programme of individual challenges and teamwork in the community. This programme brings together people of different abilities, circumstances and backgrounds and supports them to develop their core skills, build confidence and gain nationally recognised qualifications.

**Lifeshaper:** These 12 week programmes run in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Lifeshaper is designed to assist those who have experienced substance misuse problems to establish a positive and healthy lifestyle by establishing structure and routine in their lives and developing new skills and interests. Lifeshaper runs on the ethos of “work rest and play” and includes confidence building, relapse prevention, local investigation projects, IT, relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation and auricular acupuncture. Activities also include arts & crafts, health & wellbeing and regular outings to take part in physical activities such as wall climbing, horse riding, sponsored walks and quad biking.
Working with the Equalities Challenge Unit

(linked to Equality Outcome Actions 1-4, 5 & 7)

During the AY 2016/17 the College has worked extensively with the Equalities Challenge Unit on two key projects:

- Attracting Diversity: Equality in Student Recruitment in Scottish Colleges
- Supporting Workforce Diversity: Progressing Staff Equality in Colleges

Attracting Diversity: Equality in Student Recruitment in Scottish Colleges

North East Scotland College was been accepted as one of six colleges to take part in this two and a half year project.

The purpose of the project is to increase the participation of underrepresented equality groups within the student body. The project enabled us to:

- Review and benchmark data to appropriately assess underrepresentation
- Set specific and achievable targets in relation to improving participation or underrepresented equality groups
- Work to develop a regional approach with relevant partners, including the two local universities, developing an understanding of local barriers to access

As a result of this the College identified two key areas of gender imbalance in the curriculum:

- Men into Care
- Women into Computing.

A range of initiatives have been put in place as detailed in the Student Gender Action Plan at Appendix 8 including:
**Lads Care 2**
In order to help break down stereotypical attitudes to selection of courses, the Care Team are planning full day events open to both P5 & P6 pupils and S1 & S2 pupils. The format will be around a Full day course Entitled ‘Lads Care 2’ and will be offered at both Fraserburgh and City Campuses. Pupils will come to the College and will experience a Healthcare environment (Ward) a Social care (Community Care Home) and a Childcare environment (Nursery). Activities will help to promote careers and show clearly the multi-disciplinary approach to Care through an integrated services approach and will help to demonstrate how we support those who may need care services.

**Make IT Work**
In June 2016, the Computing team held a ‘Make IT work’ activity day. This was aimed at Primary school pupils. The purpose of this was twofold.

a. As a project for HN level students who as part of their course need to work on a team project.
b. To give school pupils a chance to see Computing in action and to engage with the various activities.

When Primary schools were approached, the interest was overwhelming. The original plan was to have 40 – 60 pupils taking part. The actual total was around 120 pupils with a gender split of around 50% females. The feedback from pupils and staff was excellent, the students who created and managed the activities enjoyed the experience. The demand for similar events was clear. This academic year we plan to offer three further days with two session per day. The first event will take place 29th March followed by 26th April and 7th June.
Men to Care - Creating qualification pathways to help men who may wish to change profession and may wish to consider a career in healthcare, social care or childcare – all rapidly growing areas of employment. The course combines study in the three areas with practical experience and provides the opportunity to progress to HNC/D level. On completion students will be prepared for employment or further progression to university for a degree in nursing, social work or teaching.*

* A formal articulation route is being developed between HND Childhood Practice and the MA in Primary Education offered by the University of Aberdeen.
North East Scotland College is offering an exciting new course ‘Men to Care’ starting in February 2017 at our Aberdeen City Campus.

The course combines three areas of study - Healthcare, Social Care and Childhood Practice. Set at SCQF level 6 (Higher level), it will allow you to progress to HNC/D level in August 2017 and, on completion, opportunities to gain employment or a university degree in nursing or social work (Robert Gordon University) or teaching* (University of Aberdeen).

What will you study?
You will cover the different areas of the industry whilst putting your newly acquired skills into practice with an extended Work Experience Placement.

In addition, you will achieve two National Progression Awards:
* Social Services and Healthcare
  Geared to employment in the Health or Social Care sector, with its wide range of roles: from Care Assistants to Nurses, and Support Workers to Social Workers. This programme is designed to give you firsthand experience within the social services and healthcare industry, which will help to develop key skills that employers are looking for whilst you learn about an industry you are interested in.

* Social Services, Children and Young People
  Geared to employment in the Social Services sector, working with children and families, or in Early Education settings. With a vast array of roles, from Play Leaders to Childhood Practitioners, and Nursery Managers to Nursery and Primary teachers, there are lots of employment opportunities.

Entry Requirements:
You should have a good level of both written and spoken English, as good Communication skills are a key competence in this area. You should be capable of working at SCQF Level 6 (which is the equivalent to a Higher) and should have a strong interest in the Education, Social Services and Healthcare industry sectors. Please note that you will be required to join the PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) Scheme.

www.nescol.ac.uk/courses/care/men-to-care for further information
or contact Patricia Swan, Faculty Manager - Care p.swan@nescol.ac.uk

* Subject to conditions. Please note that this course is available to all genders.
Supporting Workforce Diversity: Progressing Staff Equality in Colleges

One strand of this project has focussed on standardising the collection of staff data in the sector to improve the staff experience and provide appropriate benchmarks. The first national staff experience equality survey was launched in February 2017 and the response rate was good. We expect to receive meaningful information to help us formulate action plans going forward.

In addition, NESCol is about to participate in a further ECU in depth project focussing on occupation segregation in relation to disability, gender and race with a particular emphasis on staff development and progression.

Advancing Knowledge
(linked to Equality Outcome Action 8)

The College offers a wide range of Equalities Training and development opportunities.

One of the priorities for the newly formed Staff Equality Group has been to raise awareness of equality issues. At the Professional Development Day on 23rd January we chose Equality Awareness Raising as one of our main themes. A number of training events were run and included the following:

- Autism / Asperger’s awareness
- Dementia in the workplace
- Dyslexia and other literacy difficulties
- Mental Health Awareness
- Supporting Transgender Young People
- Working with Students from Diverse Religious Backgrounds

A number of colleagues with different protected characteristics also facilitated some discussions with small groups of staff which aimed to raise awareness of their protected characteristic as well as explain the impact of stereotyping or discrimination.
In total there were 156 attendances at the various events. Post course questionnaires indicated that the sessions were extremely well received. Feedback suggested that the courses had raised awareness. Several course were described as “thought provoking” and a number of respondents recommended that the sessions be repeated for other staff.

Improving the Experience

Staff Excellence Awards 2016

(linked to action 10)

Equality Champion, Heather Sim

For the last two years the College has held Staff Excellence Awards to recognise colleagues that go above and beyond in their roles to enhance the student experience. Heather Sim is our Equality Champion for 2016. Heather works on a part time basis as a Sponsored Initiatives Coordinator, but that doesn’t stop her when it comes to helping out and supporting the College - with both internal and external clients.
Heather seizes all opportunities to promote Girls into Energy from her S2 competitions which are run throughout schools in the North East to organising a Woman into Engineering day which allows students to see the opportunities available and meet other role models who have successfully completed the Programme.

In an ever challenging oil and gas sector where jobs are harder to come by Heather continues to press forward with her “Energy Girls” - she really does take a personal interest in each and every one of them and the students blossom and grow in confidence, becoming ambassadors for their schools; the college and the Sponsored Initiative Programmes.

What we will do next ..... 

Using the analysed data from the Curriculum Baseline Data Report, the Gender Pay Gap and Occupational Segregation Reports and the Staff Equality Report, as well as lessons learned from the evaluation of the 2015-17 Equality Outcomes, the Equality and Diversity Strategy Group, in consultation with key stakeholders, developed a new set of Equality Outcomes.

These are detailed in a separate report, Equality Outcomes 2017-21.